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UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS  
(EPISODE NO. 113)

12:30-1:30 P.M.

JULY 27, 1934

FRIDAY

ANNOUNCER: "Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers"

ORCHESTRA; QUARTET: "RANGER SONG"

ANNOUNCER: Up in the National Forests, as Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers carry on their work of managing and protecting the forest resources, there are frequent colorful, or humorous, or dramatic incidents that break in on the routine of National Forest administration. Many of these have to do with fire, the forests' worst enemy, and today, we understand, our friends at the Pine Cone Ranger Station are going to tell us a true story of a fire incident that happened not so long ago. Well, here's ranger Jim Ralston alone in his office, doing what most Rangers do - clerical work. Let's look in on him ----



JIM: (MUTTERING TO SELF) By George - that's the third time I've toted up this column and it won't come out the same way twice! ----Let's see now --- And 8's 113, and 9's 122, and ---

(JERRY ENTERS, SLAMS DOOR AFTER HIM, AND ----)

JERRY: (ANGRILY) For the love of Mike, Jim - listen here, will you --

JIM: Hi, Jerry! Looks like you're on the war-path. What's doing?

JERRY: Oh, not a thing! -- not a THING! I just made my regular patrol of Windin' Creek Canyon to see if any trout fishermen are trying to burn us up with cigarettes or illegal campfires, and ---

JIM: Take your time, Jerry. You're not enough to start a forest fire, yourself! What trouble did you bump into down there?

JERRY: (CALMER) A kind I didn't expect. The canyon was quiet enough -- no fishermen at all -- at least, not the kind I'm used to. I only met one near the whole stretch. But he was bad enough.

JIM: How do you mean?

JERRY: Well, I find him sitting by a trout-hole under the Twisty Falls. He's got a big high-power rifle across his knees and his eyes are glued on a whopping big trout -- a regular Grand-maddy! ----waiting for a shot at it'.

JIM: Shootin' trout with a rifle, eh? That ain't so good.

JERRY: Oh, it's an old trick in some localities, you know.

JIM: Yep. It ain't as bad as waitin' dynamite, but it's bad enough. Killin' hundreds of little ones to get one or two big ones. No real sportsman would do it, though. -- What did this one have to say for himself?





JERRY: He said he'd done it lots of times where he came from, and he'd heard about the big trout up here, and he thought ----

JIM: Uh huh. Same old story! Doin' what he used to do, an' not realizin' that if we're going to keep our fishing streams of any use to the public, we've got to have rules of sportsmanship. What did you do with him, Jerry?

JERRY: Turned him over to the State Game Warden. I took the rifle away from him and turned it over to the Warden for evidence, too.

JIM: Good idea! You did just right, Jerry. -- I'd like to talk to that gent though -- telling him a little story might do him more good than legal punishment. -- You see, Jerry, it's always been a Forest Service idea that friendliness, a willingness to make allowance for the other fellow's viewpoint, saves more wood sometimes than putting him in jail under the strict letter of a law he didn't know about. Of course, a lot depends on the particular case, but generally speaking, where prison or a fine embitters a man, a firm but friendly talk is something he remembers with -- well, let's say a feeling of thankfulness that he didn't get any worse handed to him. -- It reminds me of a story I'm gonna tell this fellow -- I reckon he'd better go home there this afternoon.

JERRY: Tell me the story, Jim, while I pick up a smoke. I've been chewing gum for hours all through that tindery canyon.





JIM: Yeah. Gum's a mighty fine substitute when you shouldn't smoke -- Anyway, you remember that colored boy we had playin' up around the yard some the first spring you were here?

JERRY: The little fellow we called "Smudge?" Sure! What's become of him, anyway?

JIM: Oh, I got him a better job - in town --- He was out of a job when I first saw him. Kinde nervous an' got the notion to make tenderfeet do, that they can live cheaper in the woods for a while, forgettin' that it takes experience to live and survive in the wilderness if you've always been used to civilized conveniences. How he got into Winding Creek Canyon, or was, I don't know, and he couldn't explain very clearly. One place was prob'ly like another to him, up here. Maybe thought he could live on trout. You can --- but first you've gotta catch your trout; which ain't so easy to some folks as catchin' a train, say.

Well, Jack Tully, who was assistant ranger up here before you came, was doin' the regular canyon patrol one summer. Afternoon when it was so dry you could start a fire by droppin' the label of a match-box! Tully was young an' spry, an' --mighty like you, Jerry. Bein' young, he gotadder over some forest violations than us old-timers could. We take notice as they come, and deal with them on their merits.

Anyway, down around the Big Bend of the trout-stream Tully walks into a colored boy sittin' disconsolate on a bed of pine needles an' tryin' to shake the wakin's of a cigarette out of a mighty empty tobacco-sack --- and (PAGES OFF) -----

12-8-1

12-8-1

12-8-1

(MUSIC OF "CARRY ME BACK TO OLE VIRGINNY" - FADES)

(HAGGARD HUMBLING TO HIMSELF. THEN APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS ---)

TULTY: (FROM SHORT DISTANCE) Hi, there! You can't use cigarettes in here! This is National Forest, and right now it's dry as tinder. Didn't you see the signs all down the trail -- "DANGEROUS FIRE AREA - NO SMOKING!?" What's your name? Where'd you come from?

SMUDGE: (SCARED) M-m-m-m-m's Sam-u-el, boss, bu-but folks calls me "Smudge." An ain't know, boss, an' -- an' -- True is, boss, Ah's jus' lost wild from observation, an' Ah thinks maybe a li'l pull on a cigarette would help.

TULTY: Well, I'll be damned! First time I've heard that slick for smoking in the National Forest! You mean to tell me ---?

SMUDGE: Gawd's truth, boss! An' Ah ain't got enough 'baccy in this sack to make even a teeny-weenie one! Ah ain't had nothin' to eat in two days. An' the outa work a long time, boss, an' Ah thought (FADING OUT) If Ah run into the woods ---)

(MUSIC OF "HARD TIMES COME AGAIN" FADING TO -- )

JIM: So, Jerry, this Smudge kid tells Tully the whole sad story of his forest venture. Fortunately, Tully had a ration in his back sack and gave it to the poor li'l runt, along with a gentle talk about smoking in National Forests.

(FADEOUT)





TULTY: (FADING IN) Well, that ain't count to hold you for a while, Smudge. But I'd advise you to get back where you came from, where maybe you can pick up a job. After all, you're no Daniel Boone!

SMUDGE: No sah.

TULTY: I'll be back up this way inside of a coupla hours and I'll show you an easy way out of the Canyon. Until then, so long, Smudge, and (LAUGHING) don't try to shake even a leenie-weenie one out of that empty sack. (FADING OUT) This forest's as dry as tinder, and --

SMUDGE: Lowdy! Looked like li'l Sam-u-el was hailed for the catamounts that time. That's a real nice man! Hands me his grub instead of pinchin' me! Sumtime Ah's twice so salvin' for him, when ---Huh? (SOUND OF BRUSH CRACKLING) Dat Ranger comin' back? Hope he ain't changed his mind 'bout me, an' -- No sah. That's 'tother side the creek. Ranger went down this side. Huh! Two uv 'em, an' ---Lowdy! They's both smokin' Look for dem dey jes' like the Ranger -- They's stoopin' Reck'n they seen me.

FISHERMAN: (FROM ACROSS CREEK) Hello, Rastus! How's luck?

SMUDGE: Lady Luck she said an' buried! -- for you fellas, too, if de Ranger seen you smokin' dem nice tallor-made oileroots. He jes' passed, dat on dis side.



FISHERMAN: (OFF) Which way was the Ranger going, Rastus?

SWUDGE: Down.

FISHERMAN: (LAUGHING) OK we're going up. We should worry, Jake.

Come on. --- So long, Rastus, Good luck!

SWUDGE: Same to you Gen'l'men, but if Ah was you Ah wouldn't smoke none. Dat Ranger he ses to me, ses he: 'Dis forest dry as tinder, an' (FADE) No good citizen's a-wine start a fire---

(FIRST SUGGESTION OF FIRE TERROR-MUSIC, THEN FADE IT TO )

JIM: Well, Jerry, about two hours later I'm sittin' here in the office thinkin' how nice an' quiet things are, when the telephone rings an' the fat's sure in the fire! ---

(FADE RANGER AS NARRATOR TO TELEPHONE BELL RINGING. RESUME TERROR-MUSIC

FAINTLY, BUT CRESCENDO AS EXCITEMENT INCREASES. FADE IN RANGER JIM ROBBINS IN DIRECT ACTION, HIS MANNER AND SPEECH INCREASINGLY RAPID)

JIM: (ANSWERING PHONE SNAPPILY) Forest Service! Ranger Robbins speaking! -- Windy Mountain Lookout? Hello, Hargis! What's on your mind? -- Eh! Let me get that again! -- 98 degrees southeast of Windy! OK Hargis! Now hang up and give Bald Peak a chance. Lookout there may be ringing me now! Hello! Oh, there you are, Bald Peak. Got an angle on that smoke, Tom? Yes? --- 78 northwest? OK! Hold the line while I pull the angle strings on the finder-map here -- (MUTTERING RAPIDLY OVER MAP) 98 on Windy Mountain -- 78 on Bald Peak lookout. Angle strings meet at -- (GRABBING PHONE) Sue's in the Winding Creek Canyon, Tom, just below the Big Bend! - Looks bad, you say? Coming up fast? All right! Stand by in case of calls, and tell Windy Mountain! -





JIM: (CONT'D) Hello, Windin' Creek? (JIGGLES THE HOOK) Windin' Creek operator! Ranger Robbins speaking! Fire in the Canyon! Tell the sawmill to blow its siren for the Pine Cone volunteers! This'll give 'em a chance to try out their new citizens' fire-fightin' organization. Tell their Captain, Bill Rivers, to meet me at the canyon trailhead with shovels, axes, mattocks and canteens! Minutes count! Let's go!

(SIREN HEARD FAINTLY)

JIM: Good girl! I hear it! Thanks! (SLAMS RECEIVER ON HOOK AND SHOUTS ACROSS TO QUARTERS) Hi, Boss! I'm on the jump. Fire in Winding Creek Canyon! Tulty's already down there somewhere. You'll have to take charge of the station with me both away -- (VOICES FADE)

JIM: (TO JERRY) Well, Jerry, I got out the old fliiver an' made the trail-head where the road ends in somethin' under nothin' flat -- just before the Pine Cone volunteers -- a fine bunch of boys! -- rolls in on a truck.

(TERROR MUSIC FULL BLAST - SOUNDS OF RACING ENGINES - HORNS HONKING - MEN SHOUTING -- ALL SOUNDS SUGGESTIVE OF SINISTER DRAMA -- TENSION -- SPEED!)

JIM: (IN DIRECT ACTION) Good work, boys! The rest's footwork an' tough going! Each man grab whatever equipment he can handle. Never mind the canteens. Plenty of water in the creek. Wow! Look at that rock mushroom down there! She's a humdinger, boys! Minutes count! Let's go.



WHISTLING AND SOUNDS OF MANY FEET SLIDING, RUNNING, JUMPING. TERROR MUSIC IN BACKGROUND OF DIALOGUE)

1st  
VOICE: Wonder what started it?

2nd  
VOICE: Aw, some tenderfoot with a cigarette?

1st  
VOICE: Or left a campfire burning?

2nd  
VOICE: Thought they weren't allowing campfires down there?

JIM: That don't help us a'er the sitchiff's done. Step lively, boys! Minutes count!

(TERROR-MUSIC RISES FORTISSIMO WITH SHOUTS OF MEN INCREASING SPEED. THEN MUSIC SOFTENS ENOUGH TO ALLOW CONTINUED DIALOGUE)

VOICE: Coupla fellas coming up the trail, Ranger! Maybe they know sum't'n about this.

JIM: Maybe -- but they won't say much if they know too much!  
Still -- I can use 'em -- Hey, boys! See that fire down there?

FISHER-  
MEN: Fire? No! What? -- a fire? Is there a fire?

JIM: Just started up! See anybody besides yourselves down there -- a Ranger for instance?

FISHER-  
MAN: No. We didn't see any Ranger. Haven't seen nobody at all.  
Oh yeah -- come to think -- yee -- we saw a colored boy --  
sittin' down' outside'. Maybe he was smokin' and quit when he  
saw us. He don't smoke -- especially in the woods.





A colored boy - and Well - no time to talk now. Leave your  
tools and other guffie here, boys, and grab one of these  
shovels. We'll need every man -

But and! We got to get back to town! We don't know a thing  
about fire-fightin' anyway!

JIM: Then now's a good time to learn what forest-fire means!

FISHER-  
MAN: But we got get back --

JIM: Sure, boys. This is an emergency. We good citizens got  
to help -- Come on, now. Minutes count! Let's go!

(TERROR MUSIC RESUMES FOREBODING AS MEN PROCEED, WITH FISHERMEN PROTESTING  
EVERY STEP. HIGH PITCH OF MUSIC SUGGESTION OF SPEED AND TENSION THEN  
MADE TO -- )

JIM: (TO JERRY) Well, Jerry, we got to that fire with those two  
lenderfeet kicking all the way. We found the place, early one  
darnin' toward the creek. There wasn't much breeze but it should  
ave been fanning the flames away from the creek. It would have,  
but for two men we found already on the job, working on the  
leeward side; letting our men toward the creek; working like a  
couple of veteran smoke-eaters to keep our men from getting to the  
timber up above the canyon wall. One was an under-powdered  
negro boy. The other looked like a negro, too. But for the  
situation but I couldn't have recognized Tully. They were both  
half-naked, using their shirts soaked in creek-water; sleeping at  
the fire's sides; holding air as best they could 'till help came!  
Just as we blew in and got busy, the negro boy suddenly, rolled  
over -- half-strangled with smoke; the rest of his clothes almost  
burned off him. Tully wasn't much better off --





(MUSIC OF TERROR-MUSIC, FADING TO DIRECT ACTION AGAIN)

(JIM) Get that boy to water, go ahead! He'll roast where he's lying! Not you, Tully! You're about ready to drop yourself! You go back and get some air! -- That's right, El! The kid's just eaten too much smoke. Bring him to. I'll want to question him when I've got more time -- Lean on it, boys! Trench across this side and shovel the dirt into the fire-edge! Cut away! Load brush, there! Axes! Axes! Hi! -- you two fishermen! Stand back over this way -- you there -- you there! Throw back, or dirt down with your shovels every spark that jumps the line! LEAN ON IT, BOYS!

(CONTINUED TERROR-MUSIC AT HIGHEST PITCH -- SHOUTS OF MEN -- CLICK AND CLANK OF SPADES, MATTOCKS, AXES. THEN MUSIC FADES ---)

(JIM) (TO JERRY) We fought our hard for a couple hours. Twice those two fishermen tried to desert on us, but (LAUGHING) the Pine Cone boys headed 'em back. After ten hours we got her under control, thanks to the earlier work of Tully and that colored boy is keeping her from the barrier timber above. The creek crossed her on the other side. By the time we could afford to lean on our shovels and breathe, I was about ready to look into what started this. Tully, close as an Egyptian and with his eyebrows aimed off, brought up the colored boy, who'd by this time directed his overdose of smoke ---

(FADE-IN TO SOFT MUSIC OF "CARRY ME BACK TO OLD VIRGINIA")



JIM: Hello there, boy! How d'ye feel now?

BUNDO: Oh, An's OK now. Jas' kinda queer in me head.

JIM: Tully, just what does he know about this?

BUNDO: That's one thing we needn't waste time on, Jim. He didn't start it. In fact, if it wasn't for Bundoo -- this colored boy -- the whole watershed mighta burned up. I sat and as I was traveling downstream, just as he was trying to roll a cigarette.

JIM: Eh? --- cigarette, huh?

BUNDO: But he ain't lit it, or not since after I left him. He lit one of the half-made ones, after I'd backed to him, and I looked at him as he lit that tobacco. I went on downstream -- saw nothing else -- but about a mile farther down I found a campfire, not only lit but left burning by whoever had built it! I wanted it cold; they started back up in a hurry to see if I could overtake whoever --

JIM: (INTERRUPTING QUICKLY) Hey, listen, you fishermen! Their two guns? Nobody's never told me till I say so!

FISHERMEN: But listen, Ranger -- we -- we gotta get back --

JIM: But not that rat -- Go on, Tully.



TOLTY: I didn't overtake anybody. But suddenly I saw smoke ahead of me - upstream. Found this blaze going strong, and Smudge here - this colored boy - trying to put it out all by himself. He was dancing around, waving and clapping with his hands soaked in water, and (LAUGHING) shouting something I'd said to him: "The forest's dry as tinder, an' no good citizen's a-goin' about no fire!" Apparently he'd picked up a fine idea and was now then putting it into practice. He was a-wine get out somebody else's fish, by Jiminy!

JIM: Good work, boy! And hey, now, Smudge, did you see anybody else around that might have started a fire?

SMUDGE: Yeah! Ah! Ah! Well, Ah did - they should be a-goin'! (QUITE CASUALLY) Don't you ever hear - Ah had Ah'n't!

JIM: These two fisherboys? Huh! (PAUSE - THEN THOUGHTFULLY) Ye-ah! Gosh, to think they were the only ones we met that were coming upstream -- May be the campfire builders you didn't see 'em, Talty. (LOUDLY) Hey there! You fisherboys are headin' the wrong way again! Come over here a minute! The Assistant Ranger wants to see - you - immediately!

(FINAL FAINT TERROR MUSIC; THEN FADE TO RANGER CONCLUDING THE STORY)





Well, there was little more to it, Jerry. At first it was the word of these two fishermen against that of one colored boy. But the way they had acted generally, I felt like believing the boy's statement. Mind you, he didn't say they started the fire, but that he had seen them both smoking as they travelled - which is mighty dangerous business in the forest. Finally, under persistent questioning, they broke and admitted they'd smoked and had camped overnight further down. They swore, though, they didn't start that blaze, and also that they'd carefully put out their campfire a mile below when they left. Tully had to tell them that they hadn't; he'd had to sand down their red-hot ashes an hour after they broke camp. If we hadn't had one fire, we'd prob'ly had another --- with fellows like that!

And it was so right sore the way they tried to throw suspicion on the colored boy about smoking. That boy oughta get a medal for good citizenship, if they only would give medals for that instead of more spectacular heroism. But I gave him a job around the yard to tide him over until I landed him that waiter job with Herry Grubb - you know, Grubb's Grub-Station - in town.

JERRY: That did you do with the two fishermen?





JIM: Turned 'em over to the nearest Justice of the Peace. Cootin' hold myself under the circumstances. The Judge fined 'em on at least three counts -- smoking in the forest, building campfire in forbidden area, and leaving a campfire burning in the forest. When the Judge figured he'd about scared 'em speechless, he suspended half the fines on all counts, but took it out of 'em in a certain lecture that woulda made your hair curl and your whiskers stiffen out straight!

JERRY: (INDIGNANTLY) He shouldn't have suspended nothin'! Those fellows shoulda got the limit!

JIM: No, son. When you've been in the Forest Service as long as I have, you'll find it works better to educate rather than punish. The example of that colored boy educated those two fishermen more than the fines or the Judge's lecture did. And that little story about Sledge is goin' to make this trout-shootin' brother you just told me about feel mighty ashamed of hisself, too! After all, Jerry, most folks aint bad at heart. They're just plum ignorant at times, - like this trout-shooter - or selfish, like these fishermen who care out for their own fun and hang anybody's else's -- but most often they're just plain thoughtless. I remember another time --

STUDY OF THE

RECORDS

(PAUSE) (TO MUSIC)

ANNOUNCER: Folks, the story you have just heard is given us by Stephen Chalmers, well known writer of western reader stories and author of "The Affair of the Gallows Tree," "Larabee of the Rangers," and other popular novels. The story you just heard, Mr. Chalmers says, is a true one, showing the terror of fire in the forest, what it means, how easily fire is started, and what one of the humblest of American citizens -- the colored boy known as "Smudge" -- felt and did about a particular fire. "Although few citizens," says Mr. Chalmers, "may ever get a chance to do what Smudge did -- and kept on doing till he fell senseless! -- it is up to all of us, in spirit, at least, to cooperate with the United States Forest Service in the protection and preservation of our National Forests. They are ours and mine -- a glorious heritage."

The National Broadcasting Company, and the United States Forest Service with whose cooperation this program is presented, wish to express to you, Mr. Chalmers, their sincere thanks.

Next Friday at this time, Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers will be with us again.

11/7/17/34  
11:55 A.M.

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